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Album reviews

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ALBUM REVIEWS

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BEIRUT, *the rip tide*

The nine songs that compose *The Rip Tide* are lean and regal. Beirut's album is tuneful yet offbeat, meticulous yet heartfelt. A work to swoon over. The multi-instrumentalist album sends you through a journey of self-discovery.

The Rip Tide overflows with gleaming folk-pop. The harmonious sound of ukulele to guitar, flugelhorn to trumpet, with accordion, trombone, and tuba accompaniment creates layers that can only be described as outright stunning.

"Goshen", an aching ballad march, has a calming vocal melody. The vibrato of the singer's voice describes his pain in the telling of his story.

"Santa Fe", is an exciting foot-tapper. When the percussion enters, you can get lost in the building story, and the consistent layering of instruments excites your soul.

Whether you feel your heart aching, mind wandering, or pulse racing, *The Rip Tide* is a journey to be savored.



BLUE SCHOLARS, *cinémetropolis*

The Seattle hip-hop duo Blue Scholars created the album *Cinemetropolis*, taking inspiration from the movies and their vast influence on modern life. Many track titles are dedicated to esteemed individuals, some directly tied to the film industry. This album represents how the moving image has become more of a reality than the world around us.

Blue Scholars' fan base donated money to finance the album's release. With over 2,000 backers and over \$60,000 in donations, rapper Geologic and producer Sabzi were able to release their most engaging and progressive album to date.

The first song of the album, "Cinemetropolis", prepares you for an outrageous and soulful experience. It's an amazing hook leading into a brilliant album.

The song "Slick Watts" is an ode to the city of Seattle and the Supersonics. Geo shouts out the various neighborhoods that make up Seattle in the first verse and name-drops former Sonic players in the second verse, tying the album to current events.

Cinemetropolis is by far one of the best hip-hop releases this year.



KIMBRA, *vows*

Kimbra builds interweaving vocal lines and handclaps followed by shimmering harp-like sounds, gliding synths, string washes, and insistent piano, particularly in her opening single "Settle Down". Her lead vocals are carried beautifully, her narratives full of lyrical curiosities sung in a smoky, jazzy style.

Her song arrangements are full of incredible mood shifts that take the listener on a complicated journey of sound. One of the most impressive aspects of her musical style is her refusal to slip into standard singer-songwriter mode.

This album is a mix of exotic incidental sounds that pop up all over the place, creating a punchy yet silky beat, allowing her vocals to drive the songs home. This work is a prime example of the "album experience", somewhat of a rarity these days, and shows that Kimbra has arrived and means business.